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The Newspaper Correspondent

By C. R. SANAGAN

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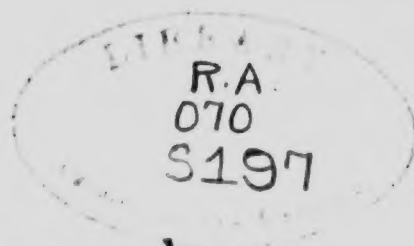
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The
Newspaper Correspondent

By C. R. SANAGAN

Toronto
The MacLean Publishing Co., Limited
1910



Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year
one thousand, nine hundred and ten, by C. R. Sanagan,
St. Thomas, Ont., in the office of the
Minister of Agriculture.

342a

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Canada, 1909

U.S., 1910

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Published 1910

The Newspaper Correspondent

Elementary Rules for Those who Contribute
to the Public Press, but who are Not
Regularly Engaged in Newspaper Work

PART I.

CLASSIFICATION IN BRIEF.

NEWSPAPER correspondents may be divided into two classes—those who write for a newspaper for that paper's direct benefit, and those who write to gain some advantage for themselves other than monetary compensation.

A special chapter is devoted to each of these classes, though, in passing, it might be said that there are perhaps as many regular contributors to newspapers, who have special news that it is to their advantage should be published, as there are correspondents, who act as reporters for the sole purpose of providing news of all kinds.

The value of newspaper space is such that only a reference is necessary here. For those who do recognize that value and who are in a position to furnish newspapers with acceptable "copy," the publication of which will be of mutual benefit, this little work is written, as well as for those who correspond or may correspond for newspapers in the capacity of reporters in places other than the places of publication.

IMPORTANCE OF NEWS.

One of the first essentials for a writer to a newspaper to get a grasp of is, what is news? Upon the importance of news everything depends. The correspondent who readily recognizes news when he sees

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it is the valuable correspondent. The one who can estimate its importance is the one who can give it proper attention—giving neither too much nor too little space to it and bringing out the salient points that a newspaper wants.

If it is a desirable thing for a correspondent to know and to be able to judge at once the importance of news, it is equally valuable for the contributor, who has a personal motive in "getting something into the paper." Many a man gets free advertising for himself or for an organization that he otherwise would not get by knowing the news feature of what he has to tell and knowing how to emphasize it so as to appeal to the editor.

With this first essential of newspaper corresponding, then, this work will deal at more or less length. It will also deal with the question of time as a factor in reporting for a newspaper and with various elements entering into the reply to the all-important question, what is news?

WRITING THE NEWS.

Next to getting the news, the most important subject upon which all newspaper correspondents should be informed is the question of how to write the news.

The writer's plan is to present some rules that anyone who has an ordinary knowledge of English, may follow.

In the first place, it may be pointed out here, that the bigger the newspaper, the less important is ordinary news; and also the smaller the newspaper, the more varied the duties of the editor and therefore the less time he has to reconstruct copy.

Anyone will see, therefore, the necessity in writing to either big or small newspapers, of sending in copy that is written according to newspaper style or usage.

It is to give both regular correspondents and occasional contributors, who are not trained newspaper writers, an idea in as concise form as possible what to

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send and how to write it, that the writer has undertaken to set forth what follows.

THE CORRESPONDENT.

Various sub-divisions might be made of the class of newspaper contributors known as "correspondents." There are the correspondents for the great metropolitan newspapers, who are trained men, who work exclusively in this way. There are the correspondents for the daily press of the larger cities, outside of the great centres, usually newspapermen connected with the editorial staffs in other cities. There are the correspondents for the small city daily newspapers in towns and villages in the constituency in which the newspaper circulates. And there are correspondents for the country weeklies. The last two classes are seldom trained newspapermen. Sometimes they are school teachers, ministers, merchants, farmers, postmasters or followers of any occupation, so long as they come in contact with the public and are in a position to become acquainted with the news of their district.

As trained newspapermen know the technique, the aim of the writer is not to give them lessons. It is, however, to assist chiefly that class of newspaper correspondents who follow other occupations for their livelihood.

Naturally some occupations fit a person to be a regular correspondent more than others. Yet there is no hard and fast rule. For instance, a doctor might be well-fitted by education to write well, yet he might not be a good judge of news; he might be well fitted to get news by reason of his close contact with the people, yet he might be so busy as to be prevented from sending news while it is still new. On the other hand a man may be a good judge of news and in a good position to get it and to send it, yet be a poor speller or composer.

Of the two, the newspaper prefers the man with the news who cannot write well, to the writer who cannot tell his news and tell it soon.

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The remuneration one gets for sending budgets of news from villages and small towns is, of course, small, sometimes only the paper; but there are obvious advantages at times in being a correspondent, while to many it is a source of pleasure and intellectual profit.

The man or woman who lives in a small place and who desires to become a correspondent of a newspaper, should first take notice whether or not one of the newspapers in the nearest city is getting news from his or her district. If not, a brief note to the editor will generally bring back paper and stamped envelopes and the information that the paper will be sent to the correspondent gratis.

When one has shown a faculty for getting news to a paper promptly and if the village or town is of some importance in the district, from two to ten dollars a month may be secured. Some small city papers pay so much per column, as the papers of the larger cities do, the rate ranging from \$1.50 to \$3 per column, while the larger city papers pay from \$3 to \$5 per column. Where one is corresponding on a price-per-column basis, it is the more satisfactory to follow newspaper usage and "boil things down."

THE CONTRIBUTOR.

As for that other class of correspondent, the occasional contributor, there are many reasons why he or she should understand the fundamental principles of news-getting and news-writing.

These are days of municipal publicity and the truly public-spirited man likes to see the news of his locality in the nearest city newspaper and as many other newspapers that will consider that news worth while. Sometimes it may be a village merchant believes good would result from the constant advertising the community would get from correspondence in the nearest daily, or even the nearest weekly. He may induce some young man or woman to undertake the work for the pleasure and educational value of it. Failing that, he may get in touch with an editor himself, and when

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anything "newsy" occurs, send it in. If he does, he will soon realize that one of the factors in the prominence the item will get is the promptness with which it gets to the paper.

Then there are occasional contributors, whose chief desire is not civic, but society or some other class publicity. Secretaries of young people's associations, fraternal orders, etc., for instance, have occasion to make reports to a newspaper while sporting organizations, and in fact, all kinds of societies find it valuable to know how to submit "copy" to a newspaper.

In addition to the solely selfish side of newspaper contributing, there is the opportunity of rendering service to an institution that goes hand-in-hand with the progress of a community. A newspaper is really everybody's. There is a mutual advantage in the development of a home paper, so that everybody ought to contribute to it when he can, if it only be to the extent of sending an item of personal news.

There are, of course, certain men and women who profit directly by occasional contributions of news. These, together with the representatives of societies and so forth, are referred to below, individually.

Before considering the relation of the newspaper to the individual, however, it might be well to point out that one of the first things a contributor should bear in mind is the distinction between news and advertising. It may be news, for instance, to say that "John Smith has gone to New York on business"; but it is advertising, and not news, to say that "John Smith, the enterprising merchant, of this village, has received some new dress goods from New York, and is offering bargains." True, there are times when a news item has an advertising value, but it passes because it is news, as, for instance, the announcement of a concert or other entertainment; but in cases like this the editor will generally draw his blue pencil through references to the price of admission.

Outside of the man whose chief desire is to get publicity for his village or town, and who may pro-

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perly be included among the regular correspondents, for such, as a rule, he becomes, there are men and women in some occupations, who quite naturally become occasional contributors, and these are given below. Those who are, or may be, among a newspaper's regular correspondents, may get some help from the list, as these occasional contributors are themselves sources of information for newspaper reporters.

The minister probably comes first among the occasional, in fact, almost regular, contributors of special news. In many cities the churches advertise, and in the smaller places the progressive churches at least realize the value of publicity. Though the minister must know where to draw the line between news and straight advertising, he can get a great deal of free publicity by adapting himself to the rules of the newspaper into which he desires to obtain a hearing for his church. By taking every advantage of newspaper opportunities, he can get a larger attendance at his church services, a keener interest among the members and, when entertainments are held, bigger audiences. Announcements in which the price of admission is given are usually looked upon as advertising; and even without mentioning the admission, the contributor must avoid a waste of space about "rare treats" in store, etc. At the same time, the same end may be attained by mere reference to such money-producing events, when accompanied by reports of sermons or news of the church. For instance, improvements to or enlargements of a church, or the burning of a mortgage, or a generous gift or endowment, or the engaging of an organist, or the decease of a prominent member—these are all items which a minister may give a newspaper in return for courtesies already or to be extended. As to sermons, editors seldom require reports of any length. A visiting minister is sometimes reported briefly, but unless the pastor of the church says something new or something in a new way, his sermon is of little use to the paper.

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Statements as to secular problems are at times given prominence, but it is a safe rule to report sermons as briefly as possible. In doing so, the subject suffices for most editors, without any Scriptural quotation.

Similarly to a church, it is of value to a fraternal organization or social club to get publicity at times. It is generally the secretary's duty to communicate with the newspaper, and the secretary who gets the most space is the one whose copy needs the least revision and whose report is in the earliest. The secretary must know, too, that there is a difference between news and a "puff." If a society plans a benefit concert or initiates a few new members or "is doing a grand work," that is a puff. If it elects officers, or names delegates or plans to have a building of its own, or to invite a convention, or do anything that would interest the readers of the paper, that is news. In such reports the secretary is advised to omit such meaningless phrases as "the minutes were read and confirmed," or "routine business was transacted." By watching what an editor does with one's copy, the contributor will soon see what the newspaper wants.

Likewise, secretaries of boards of trade, merchants' associations and similar organizations will find that reports, written to the point and while the news is fresh, are welcomed by the newspaper, and in turn do good to the organization gaining the publicity.

Educationalists also find it to their advantage to cultivate the co-operation of the newspaper in their work. For instance, in the smaller cities and towns the newspapers will publish an honor roll each month. This has a stimulating effect upon the pupils and is appreciated by the parents. Reports of progress along other educational lines can always find their way into the public press, and the school teacher or inspector who desires the best results will also acquaint himself with newspaper usage in order to avoid the blue pencil or the waste paper basket.

Military officers find use for newspaper space, publicity very often proving a means of popularizing a

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military organization. The police also find it valuable, though they are seldom called upon to write reports for the press, being visited regularly by the reporters.

The same is true of railway officers and hotel managers, though they could frequently get extra publicity by taking the time to write a news item or telephoning it to a newspaper.

Undertakers are another class called upon regularly by the reporters, and they early learn what is news. Many, however, find it pays to learn the way to tell a news story and have it written for the reporter when he calls.

It is *infra dig.* for lawyers and doctors to advertise, yet many get valuable publicity and for no money by simply sending prompt reports to newspapers of cases which come under their eye and which they are at liberty to make public.

Contractors comprise another class which profits from the publication of news items concerning themselves. And as building news is always given more or less prominence in the press, there is every reason why the contractors should remember what is news and let the nearest paper have it while it is still news.

Of all the contributors to the public press there is no one gets quite so much value as the theatrical agent. Theatres pay for their display advertising, but much of the reading matter goes in free as an exchange of courtesy. But it is a fact that perhaps seventy-five per cent. of the advance notices sent to newspapers goes to the waste paper basket. Why? Simply because so many press agents know little of newspaper requirements and do not take the trouble to study them. Some write with the editorial "we," which invariably means the end of them. Others make their notices long, and perhaps a busy editor doesn't think it worth while to do the necessary "cutting." Few, very few, have the wisdom to incorporate in an advance notice a news element or a news style.

There are other classes in every community, who, at some time or other, have occasion to contribute to

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a newspaper, and the writer hopes that in the rules for the guidance of regular newspaper correspondents in the succeeding chapters, they may learn the rudiments, with which they will undoubtedly find access to a newspaper's columns the much easier.



PART II.

NEWS GETTING.

WHAT is news? To know that is the first requirement of the newspaper reporter. He must not only "know news," but he must know how much space it is worth.

Yet it is difficult to lay down any hard and fast rule or to give a comprehensive list enumerating classes of news in order of their value. The average newspaperman accepts it as part of his creed that a person must possess a sixth sense to know news and "size it up."

However, there are sufficient general principles to help a beginner, and, by following these, the newspaper contributor will quickly attain the faculty of judging news. In this connection, the writer would suggest that the correspondent watch carefully what the editor does with his copy, not only to follow the particular paper's style, but to estimate the prominence that may be given to certain classes of news.

In the first place, the character of the paper and its constituency must be considered, and, with this in mind, that which will interest the largest proportion of the readers is, generally speaking, the most important news.

There are some things which always constitute news. Some, in fact, comprise such important news that the correspondent should as quickly as possible get the bare facts and notify his paper by telegraph or telephone. This gives the paper the story for its first edition thereafter, and if the editor can do so he will send a member of the staff to write the story fully. Otherwise he will wire back how much to send.

Sometimes a correspondent will get the reply: "Send all you think it is worth."

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This will put to a test the judgment of the correspondent for it is as important, or nearly so, not to send too much as it is to send enough.

Such big news as would come in this category are murders, railway accidents or any catastrophes.

In accidents of any kind the correspondent should bear in mind that the essential news elements are the names of the persons killed and injured, the location, time and nature of the accident, as well as its cause.

Certain things are always news of sufficient importance to telegraph or telephone, which demand of a correspondent the securing of all necessary facts, but which are scarcely of enough importance to warrant the despatch of a staff writer.

Under this heading might be included:

Fatal accidents.

Accidents attended by serious injury.

Suicides.

Fires of consequence.

Deaths of prominent people.

Any deaths under peculiar circumstances.

Burglaries.

Grievous assaults.

Arrests of fugitive criminals.

Bank failures.

Oil, gas or mineral discoveries.

There are other classes of news which may or may not be worth sending by wire—the correspondent must decide according to the newspaper he is contributing to. If not worth wiring, the following may at least be worth sending by first mail to many papers of ordinary size:

Deaths.

Marriages.

Births of triplets.

Golden or diamond weddings.

Elections of officers by fraternal, church, sporting or other organizations.

Meetings of public interest.

Any sporting news.

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New buildings and realty transfers of importance.
Business changes.
Fires, not in the disastrous class.
Minor accidents.
Calls to ministers.
New municipal undertakings.
Exceptional harvest yields.
Exceptional catches of fish or game.
Anything exceptional, in fact.
Philanthropic bequests.
Police news, except minor offences such as drunk
and disorderly charges.
Almost anything out of the ordinary.

PERSONAL NEWS.

Small city dailies, as well as country weeklies, appreciate bona-fide personal news.

In this connection it might be well to point out a few things that are not news. And first is the personal joke.

If there is anything worse than missing real news it is sending false news or news that, if published, will do a paper harm.

If there are two such persons as Mr. and Mrs. John Jones, it is all right to report that "Mr. and Mrs. John Jones are visiting in New York," but if John Jones is a single man, it is no joke, certainly not news, to send such a personal.

The coupling of a man's name with that of a woman in such a manner as to lead the editor to pass the item as bona-fide, but which will embarrass the persons mentioned is, likewise, neither a joke nor news. Many items of personal news of a similar character to those mentioned do get into a newspaper's columns, but sooner or later the correspondent "joking" is discovered and he is promptly cut off the list.

It doesn't pay a correspondent to "work" a joke on anyone through a newspaper.

Similarly, it doesn't pay a correspondent to use a newspaper to "get even" with anyone.

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Strictly private affairs, of course, do not constitute news.

In addition to these things, which, it must be obvious even to a beginner, are not news, the correspondent must keep in mind the fact that a newspaper is a commercial concern and cannot print advertising unless accompanied by the necessary cash in payment.

And in the reporting of legitimate news, a correspondent must avoid sending anything of a libelous nature. Never accuse a person of a crime before the courts do—and then let the courts do the accusing, simply reporting to that effect—neither the newspaper nor its correspondent constitute a judge or jury.

Once again, remember to eliminate personal feelings. Never let them be an incentive to either sending news that should not be published or keeping back news that should be published.

PART III.

NEWS WRITING AND SENDING.

NEXT to reporting to getting the news and sending it by wire, if it is still news is to send it so that it will need the least editing. Many an ordinary piece of news is thrown aside because a busy editor has not time to revise the copy.

Big stories, of course, secure attention despite defective writing, but the correspondent who can prepare copy for a big as well as a little story is appreciated.

This will be set forth more fully further on.

Here are some of the main essentials in the preparation of copy that a correspondent should remember:

1. Be neat.
2. Put the kernel of the story in the first paragraph—the feature in the first sentence.
3. Be brief—don't pad.
4. Write news, not editorial.
5. Always give names and give them accurately.
6. Be grammatical, as far as possible.
7. Use simple language; avoid hackneyed phrases and unnecessary adjectives.

NEATNESS.

Being neat does not simply mean writing plainly—it means that and much more.

A knowledge of what the editor does with copy sent by mail, or delivered otherwise than by telegraph or telephone, will help one to fully realize the extent and importance of being neat.

In the first place, the editor scans the copy to see if there is what he considers a big news story. If there

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... makes what he has suffice, with some editing, or gives it more particulars.

He takes each item which he considers worth a separate heading and writes that heading, and herein is the first reason why a newspaper contributor should be neat.

Never commence an item close to the top of a page!

In almost every newspaper office nowadays copy is set on machines that cast a line of type in one piece. The headlines, at least that part in large type, is set by hand. That means that one man handles one part and another man the other. When the "make-up" comes to put the two parts together in the "form" he must have some means of identifying the machine-set type. This is accomplished by each article in type being preceded by a "catch-line," which is worded the same as the first part of the heading. The editor, of course, has had to put this catch-line at the top of operator.

the first page of the copy that goes to the machine.

Emphasis is laid upon this point because a beginner is likely to leave no room at all at the top of the page, where the editor can add a line.

Besides the catch-line, in some offices part of the heading is set on the same machine as the news itself. For this reason, room should be left for several lines.

It is also desirable at times to put at the top of a despatch "Special to the" This should be left for the editor.

Therefore, leave plenty of room at the top of page!

Inexperienced contributors sometimes think they are helping the editor by putting a heading on the news. This is worse than useless. In the first place, if the news is properly told, the editor will know what it is by reading the first sentence. Then, too, it spoils the neatness because it is the first thing blue-pencilled.

It is the duty of the man who reads the copy to write the heading. He knows what size heading it is worth, the paper's style and the number of letters that will go in the type decided upon.

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Don't write headlines!

It is, with the matter and the reverse of it, leaving, is the first step to neatness.

The next step is to write plainly, and especially names.

In addition to this it is always wise to leave a line of space between every two lines of writing so that corrections may be made.

Where the writing is cramped, and perhaps not plain, editorial changes destroy the neatness of the correspondence.

And neatness means time-saving to a newspaper, for after copy leaves the editor it has to be read by at least one compositor and one proof-reader.

Then, too, one should commence each new news item on a separate sheet of paper.

Never commence an item on the same sheet of paper on which another is finished.

Otherwise, if the editor desires to make separate stories of them, he has to cut the pages.

This does not apply to correspondence comprising mere personals. Such items may follow one another to go under the head of the town or village, but to the news worth separate headings.

Just what items are likely to be given headings may be judged by a careful study of the newspaper and its policy—what it does with your copy and with others'.

For this reason and because it is necessary sometimes for a foreman to divide an article among two or more compositors, it is a cast-iron rule in all offices *never to write on the two sides of the paper.*

Writing on both sides causes confusion all round.

Paper is cheap, and the newspaper will supply you with all you need.

To further ensure neatness and make editing and type-composing easy, use paragraphs frequently. If the editor desires to run them together it is easier for him to indicate this than to separate them, if the

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sentences are cramped and he wishes to strike out any.

Avoid, also, breaking a paragraph at the end of a page and putting a final word of a sentence on the next page.

THE FIRST SENTENCE.

The first essential to telling a story well, from the newspaper point of view, is to tell the story in the first few words.

For the same reason, if the correspondent has five or six items, one of which is important and the others of a less important nature, he should put the most important story first.

Emphasis is laid upon this point, as the writer's experience has been that the majority of untrained correspondents have retained the idea obtained in school days of "compositions," that every story should have a high-sounding introduction.

Others, again, imagine that they are recording history in chronological order and need to commence with the cause and lead up to the effect.

On the contrary, the newspaper rule is that the effect should be given first; the cause can come afterward.

For instance, a correspondent may write a story of a fire, involving an accident, and if he wished to word it the way the editor would not want it, it might read this way:

New Paris, July 10. John Smith, who owns a large grocery store in this place, went to Washington this week and left his establishment in charge of his bookkeeper, Miss Mary Williams. This morning Miss Williams was late in arising and instead of completing her toilet at home, brought her curling tongs to the store, where she heated them over the gas jet in the office.

She accidentally burned her forehead.

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and in her excitement overturned a pile of invoices on the burning gas. These became ignited and while she ran for some water the flames made such progress that she had to make her escape and give the alarm.

This she did as quickly as possible, but the firemen were delayed a few minutes. A large crowd followed the brigade, and when the store was reached it was found to be in flames. The devouring element soon spread and while Chief Anderson was on a ladder, one wall gave way and buried him beneath the brick. Brave hands were quickly to his rescue and he was removed to the hospital, where it was found that one leg and one arm were broken, and he was badly bruised. His many friends are glad to know that he will recover. The loss on the store will be about \$5,000.

In the first place a news story such as that would be worth telegraphing to any but the metropolitan papers, and even these would accept such news if it were from a place not too far removed from the place of publication.

But either mailed or wired, what would be the first thing the editor would learn from such a message?

That John Smith, grocer, has gone to Washington.

Yet the story is that a fire chief is nearly killed while on duty, and that a woman's vanity is the cause of it.

The way the correspondent might have commenced the same story to suit the news editor would be something like this:

New Paris, July 10.—Fire Chief Anderson narrowly escaped death when a wall of John Smith's grocery store fell on

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him to-day at a fire caused by the book keeper, Miss Mary Williams, curling her hair in the office. He is in the hospital with a broken leg and arm and badly bruised, but will recover. The loss on the store was about \$5,000, fully covered by insurance.

This would suffice. But supposing the correspondent did wish to add a few details, he could do so without harm to himself or worry to the editor, for the latter could easily run his blue pencil through the rest of the story if he did not want the details. Worded as in the first example above, the item would have to be entirely re-written.

Sometimes a story can so neatly be told in one sentence. But the central feature of it can be given in the first sentence, while the first paragraph can always contain a substance of the whole story.

This is a rule, which, if followed, will make a correspondent an appreciated contributor.

BE BRIEF.

This rule, too, aids a correspondent in being brief.

He sees by his ability to give a substance of a news story in one paragraph that it is possible for him to keep within a limit.

What follows the first paragraph should be a development of the story as given in the opening summary, bringing out those details which are of interest.

In this part of his story, the correspondent should ever keep before him the rule: *Be brief.*

He should avoid unnecessary adjectives, unnecessary qualifying phrases and details of no bearing or of no general interest.

To use the newspaper expression, he should "boil it down."

If the newspaper is paying the correspondent space rates, that is all the more reason why he should be brief. Otherwise, he might give the impression that he is purposely "padding," and no newspaper wants

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a correspondent to "pad," least of all one who is paid according to space.

AVOID EDITORIAL.

At the outset of this chapter, one of the essentials set forth for the correspondent was to write news, not editorial.

Editorial is simply another word for "opinion."

Yet it is very often difficult for the correspondent to distinguish between what is comment and what is news.

The reporter soon learns to make the distinction because his first attempt to incorporate comment into a report is immediately met with his attention being called by the city editor to the portion blue-penciled and with the information that the editorial writer of the paper might be relied upon for this particular department.

The outside correspondent, however, whose regular work is not newspaper work, may only notice that parts of his reports have been cut out. But this is not quite as much a help to his understanding of the situation as the reporter gets. A few illustrations may, therefore, serve to show how a correspondent can avoid falling into the error of voicing his own opinions.

Supposing a correspondent had a story of a level crossing accident and he wrote it this way:

Woodstock, N.Y., April 20.—James White, a farmer residing three miles east of here, together with his two sons, James and John, were killed while crossing the New York railroad at First Street to-day. Mr. White misjudged the distance of the train, which was the Erie Limited westbound, and when the rig was on the tracks, the train, going at seventy miles an hour, struck it, hurling the three occupants fifty feet. James White was 45 years of age, and his sons,

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James and John, nine and six, respectively. All three were killed instantly.

This dangerous crossing should be protected. The town should certainly take some action to have the company erect gates, or at least keep a watchman there.

Coroner Johns on has ordered an inquest to be opened this evening.

A despatch such as this would be one that would receive a certain amount of prominence and one with which an editor would take but little exception.

He would glean from it the fact that the crossing was unprotected and might insert a reference to this point, but the comment would be all expurgated. Had the coroner expressed the opinion that the city or some other official made the remark it would have been permissible for the correspondent to have quoted him, but the correspondent should avoid comment of his own.

In a case like the foregoing the copy would appear after the editor had edited it about as follows.

Woodstock, N.Y., April 20. James White, aged 45, a farmer residing three miles east of here, and his sons, James and John, nine and six years, respectively, were instantly killed while crossing the New York railroad at First Street to-day. The crossing is unprotected, and Mr. White misjudged the distance of the Erie Limited westbound. The train was going at seventy miles an hour and hurled the three occupants of the car fifty feet. Coroner Johns on has ordered an inquest to be opened this evening.

Editorial, of course, does not preclude the use of necessary description. For instance, adjectives may be used where they make the meaning clearer; while qualifying a statement, they would not be editorial.

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For instance, the correspondent might write that "the Hon. George Brown delivered a splendid address here this evening on the subject of the tariff, and was listened to by a large and enthusiastic audience." While it would be quite proper, however, to describe the speaker's style and quote his words, it would not be proper for the correspondent to comment on the speaker's argument, either favorably or adversely.

In this respect it might be well to point out that a correspondent will always be safe, in reporting a political meeting, to not only avoid open comment, but to refrain from "coloring" a report.

Always give a fair report!

If the newspaper is one that, in matters of a political nature, introduces into its news columns editorial (a practice being more and more discountenanced by up-to-date newspapers) let the man who reads your copy add the "coloring."

In addition to expressions of opinion on current events, studiously avoid the use of "we" or "our," either editorially or otherwise!

For instance, *never* use "we understand that," "we are informed that," or "we are glad to hear that." Even if you are corresponding for some country weekly that permits these expressions in its columns, do not fall into the habit yourself!

Not only should the use of "we" in cases similar to those mentioned be *always* avoided, but the use of it in referring to the people of a certain community, or even country, is not good form. The same rule applies to the possessive case, "our."

Never use the first person, except in quoting someone, and then as seldom as possible, and only between quotation marks!

THE IMPORTANCE OF NAMES.

Always mention names!

A correspondent should not mention names unless the story is authentic and since a newspaper wants none but authentic news, the correspondent may take

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It is an essential requirement that names be always given.

Many a good story is reduced to a valueless item by the omission of the names of the principals of the story.

Occasionally something will occur worth reporting where the names are unavailable. For instance, the finding of the dead body of a person apparently murdered would constitute a news story worth "putting on the wire," even though the name of the victim could not be ascertained. Similarly, the drowning of, or other fatal accident to, or suicide of an unknown person would be acceptable news.

But in almost all other cases a nameless story is a valueless story.

For instance, imagine news of an elopement appearing without the names of the interested parties!

In cases where the principals are prominent people there is all the more reason for being particular as to giving names.

Almost as bad as omitting names altogether is to spell names incorrectly.

Get names, get them accurately, and give them correctly, is a cardinal principle in corresponding for newspapers.

BE GRAMMATICAL.

While a newspaper would rather have a correspondent, who can get news, but cannot write perfectly grammatical English, than a learned scholar who doesn't know news or doesn't know enough to send it promptly, there is no reason why a correspondent with only a fair knowledge of English grammar should not combine the qualities of the most desirable contributor.

A few simple rules that should not be forgotten are:

Be careful as to number.

Be sure that subject and predicate agree, as Mr

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and Mrs. Jones of Chicago, *are* the guests of friends," not *is* the guests of friends."

A common error is to use a singular verb with nouns like society or club which will take either singular or plural verbs and then use a plural pronoun.

In regard to such words, one should follow the newspaper style. Some adhere to one rule, making all such words singular; others to another, making them plural; while others follow both, using the singular when unity and plural when individuality is implied. For instance, "the society *recre* present in large numbers," but "the society *is* going in a body." If the singular is used do not continue with a plural pronoun, but use *it* instead of *they*.

Correspondents should watch their work in this matter of number, both as to making verb agree with noun and pronoun with noun.

BE CAREFUL AS TO TENSE

Do not mix tenses. That is, do not commence a paragraph with the present tense and in the next sentence use the past tense, nor future, nor any other tense unless to express a difference in time.

Tense is too large a subject to be dealt with at any length here; the correspondent should occasionally re-read a school grammar to ensure correct writing.

However, it may be well to point out here that in newspaper writing the rule is to change the tense in reporting a speaker, where the report is not in the first person.

Where the report is in the first person the words quoted should be in quotation marks.

The double quotation marks are used at the beginning of a speech, thus: "

They are also used at the beginning of each paragraph within the same speech or statement.

The final double quotation marks are used at the end of the speech or statement and not at the end of

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each paragraph, if the continuous sentences quoted are divided into paragraphs.

Also notice that a quotation within a quotation, that is, a word, phrase or sentence quoted by the speaker himself, is given between single quotation marks, thus " " ", as for example:

Chicago, Sept. 11.--That the United States should seek closer trade relations with Canada was the contention of John P. Gordon in a speech at the Lyceum theatre to-night. He spoke under the auspices of the Board of Trade, and was listened to by a large audience, which seemed in sympathy with his argument, as it gave the speaker hearty applause when he said that the United States and Canada were brothers, not cousins.

Among other things, Mr. Gordon said: "We believe the time has come when the high tariff wall should have a few of the top stones knocked off. We believe in reciprocity and we must make the move. Canada's Premier has said, 'Canada will never go to Washington to seek free trade,' and if Canada will not come to Washington, we should go to Ottawa.

"Canada is a growing market and we should make the move now."

As to capitalization, notice the system followed in whatever paper you are corresponding for, as this is largely a matter of office rule. Some papers, for instance, use capital "A" in "*Association*," while others use lower case or small "a." Some papers put as many words in lower case as possible, as "*town council*," "*legislature*," "*telephone company*" or "*society*." The preferable rule, however, when referring to a particular body is to print it "*Town Council*," "*Legislature*," "*Telephone Company*," "*Society*," es-

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pecially where the name of such organization is given.

The best way, however, is to follow the style used in the newspaper you are writing for. Similarly, one should take notice whether or not the paper follows the rule of using "Mr." before a man's name where the initials are given.

Do not separate infinitives nor needlessly separate the parts of verbs.

BE CAREFUL AS TO PUNCTUATION.

Correspondents should be careful to punctuate so that there will be no mistaking the meaning. Use the comma (,) to subdivide sentences, so as to make the meaning clear, and especially at the beginning and end of an explanatory clause. Use the semi-colon (;) to divide two incomplete sentences or two sentences that depend upon each other. Use the period (.) to indicate the end of the sentence. Use the colon (:) to indicate something to follow.

Notice in regard to quoting Scripture the following style of punctuation: St. Matt. iv, 6:

Further hints as to grammar will be found in a list of expressions to avoid, given under the next heading of "Simple Language."

USE SIMPLE LANGUAGE.

Reference has been made to the necessity of "boiling down."

It is not only necessary to avoid, for the sake of brevity, unnecessary qualifying expressions, but it is also necessary to avoid, for the sake of clearness, long and unusual words where shorter or more common words will answer.

A newspaper is not published merely for the learned in literature, but for everybody who can read ordinary English.

It is generally possible to express oneself in a news report in language that is plain to the average reader.

A newspaper is no place for "fine writing."

At the same time it is not necessary to use slang.

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Neither is it necessary for a correspondent to use hackneyed expressions.

In this connection a list of commonly-used words and phrases, which should be avoided, may help the correspondent. In the list below, with some of the words to be avoided are given other words, which are preferable and which express the same meaning:

DO NOT USE:

Above or over for *more than*.
And, after the word *try*; say "try to do."
Apt for *likely*.
Affect for *effect*; to *effect* is to do, to *affect* is to have an effect or influence upon.
Balance for *remainder*.
Beat for *defeat*.
Canine for *dog*.
Devouring element for *fire*.
Don't for *doesn't*; one is plural, the other singular.
Decease as a verb.
Emigrant for *immigrant*; one leaves a country, the other enters a country.
Esq.
Flying visit.
Gents for *gentlemen*.
Gentlemen where *men* will do.
Graduates for *is graduated*; a person does not *graduate* but *is graduated* from a school.
Holiday as a verb.
In our midst.
Lady for *wife*.
Lady where *woman* will do.
Late in speaking of a funeral; say "the funeral of Mr. Brown" not "the funeral of *the late* Mr. Brown."
Learn for *teach*.
Locate for *find*.
Marry for *is married*; a minister *marries* a man and a woman and the man and the woman *are married*.
Needless to say.

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Of for *have*; not *would of* done but *would have* done so.

Or for *nor*; or follows *either*, *nor* follows *neither*.

Occur for *take place*; *occur* signifies by chance or accident, *take place* signifies arrangement.

On the sick list for *ill*.

Past for *last* in "the *last* two months."

Per for *a*; *per* should only be used before Latin nouns.

Render for *sing*.

Sabbath for *Sunday*.

Shall for *will* or *will* for *shall*. To express simple futurity the forms are I *shall*, you *will*, he *will*; to express determination: I *will*, you *shall*, he *shall*.

Somebody's *all smiles*, it's a girl.

Stopped for *stayed*.

Under the parental roof.

Wedding bells will soon ring.

Very, where not absolutely necessary.

You and I for *you and me*, when in the objective case.

A WORD IN CONCLUSION.

In sending news whether by mail or telegraph, write as plainly as possible and *always sign your name!*

No long dispatches should be sent to a newspaper by wire without first enquiring as to how much is wanted. This is known as sending a query. And in sending a query, be sincere. *Do not fake*. In other words, do not send a query more sensational than the news itself, or misleading.

And do not fake, either, in the matter of news; a newspaper will overlook incapacity and mistakes—sometimes—but never faking.

When you get an order for 200 words, do not send double the amount. Trust the editor's judgment, until he tells you to use your own judgment. And when he does that, you may accept it as a compliment.

Finally, be loyal and reliable. Don't wait to be stirred up on a big story. Get busy as soon as any-

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thing happens. In that way a correspondent will acquire a reputation for reliability.

Even if things have been quiet, do not leave your district for a day without securing a substitute who will protect your paper in case something does occur that will turn the eyes of the world on your particular locality.

It will therefore be seen that reliability includes more than accuracy and promptness.

And reliability, sincerity and the knowledge of news are all virtues, possible to most persons who would aspire to being ideal correspondents.

